

Towns Reap Thousands in Shared-Services Grants

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Two Union County towns and three in Somerset have received a share of \$238,000 in state aid to study the possibility of sharing public services, the Department of Community Affairs announced yesterday.

North Plainfield, Watchung and Green Brook received \$61,285 to examine the possibility of sharing fire and EMS services. Fanwood and Scotch Plains received \$149,750 to pay consultants to assess the possibility of creating a joint library in a new library building.

Community Affairs Commissioner Susan Bass Levin announced the award of more than \$238,000 in Sharing Available Resources Efficiently (SHARE) grants in Trenton. The aid was given to 10 municipalities statewide.

"SHARE grants help encourage local governments to be more creative as they get the most out of their tax dollars," Levin said.

Gov. Jon Corzine, in a statement, said, "Sharing services is an integral part of increasing government efficiency and a vital component of my administration's property tax reform plan. By looking at consolidating services, these towns are showing a dedication to driving down costs and increasing government efficiency."

Neptune City and Avon-by-the-Sea in Monmouth County received \$19,800 to pay a consultant to examine the feasibility of a joint emergency dispatch service. Tabernacle, Tabernacle Township Fire District #1, Shamong and Medford Lakes in Burlington County obtained \$18,000 to consider shared fire and EMS services.

The DCA's SHARE program provides assistance for the study or implementation of any regional or shared service agreement. The aid is available to local governments and nonprofit organizations. DCA has awarded a total of \$6,573,335 through 98 SHARE Grants since the program's inception.